Budget Amendment to Establish Conservation Easement Projects in Open Space Bond Fund

Presented by

Ariel Zijp

Farmland Preservation Manager

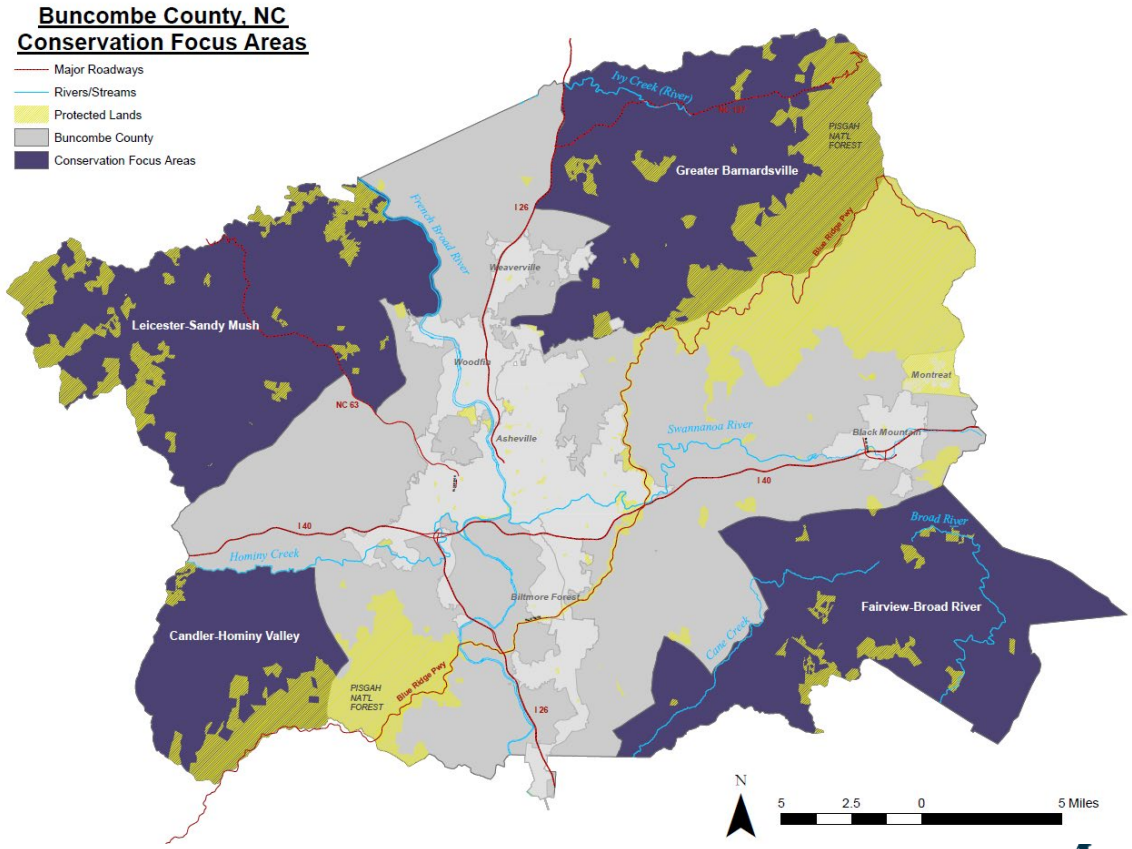
Ag and Land Resources Department

October 7, 2025

Agricultural Growth Zone Funding

Funding Source	Amount	Type
NCDA&CS AGZ Award–	$1,945,443	Easement Acquisition
Buncombe County Open Space Bond Request for required match	$2,345,443*	Easement Acquisition and transaction costs

*Feb 2025 – BOC approved match for AGZ grant



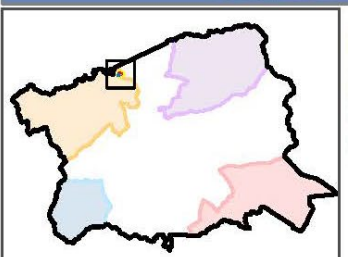
Open Space Bond Eligibility for County Easement Purchase Requirements

Meets 2 of the following criteria:

- ❑ Is this in one of our designated farmland priority regions?
- ❑ Is this property in proximity to other protected lands?
- ❑ Does this property have prime, unique, local, or statewide important agricultural soils?
- ❑ Is this a project with a significant environmental, or scenic importance?
- ❑ Is this an active working farm or century farm?
- ❑ Is the size of the property significant?
- ❑ Is this a time sensitive project? (Elderly landowner, financial hardship, forced sale)



Cedar Hill Farm Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Easement Area +/- 63
Current Farmstead
Future Housesites
Exclusion Area +/- 0.5 acres
ROW to Homesite

Conservation Focus Areas
Candler-Hominy Valley
Fairview-Broad River
Greater Barnardsville
Leicester-Sandy Mush

Cedar Hill Farm

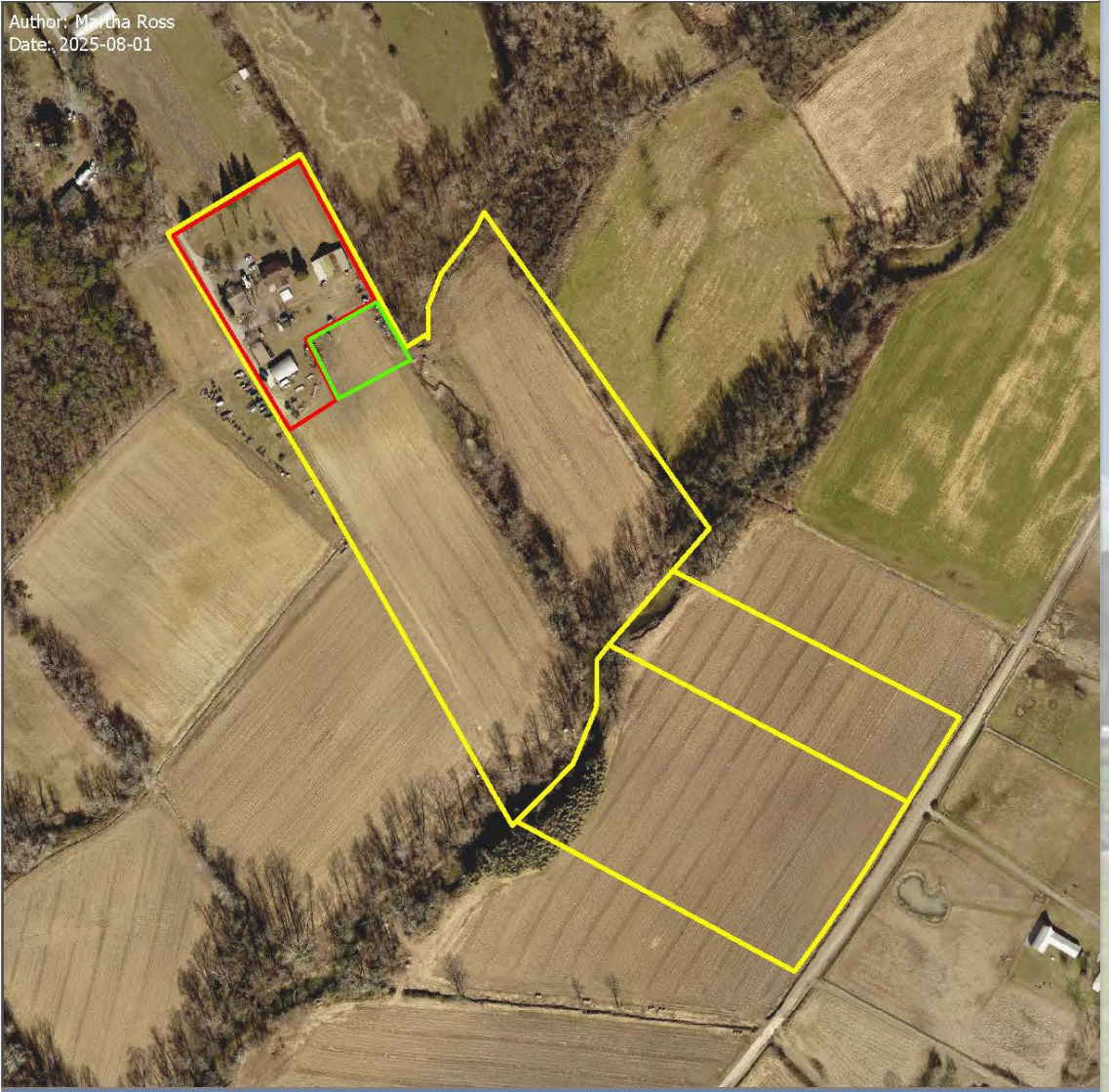
63 acres on Cedar Hill Rd, Alexander

- Cattle and hay production
- 53% prime soils
- Bordered by the Sandy Mush Game lands on both western and eastern boundaries
- Northeastern portion fronts the French Broad River
- Meets 5 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

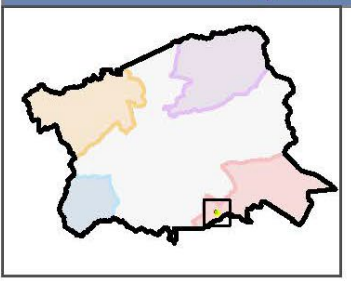
Budget:

- Current Transaction Cost Request: $53,300
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant – $225,000 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond – $225,000 (estimate)**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY



Ray Wilson - Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Ray Wilson Farm
- Property Boundary, +/-26 acres
- Exclusion Area, +/- 6 acres
- Future Farmstead

Conservation Focus Areas
- Candler-Hominy Valley
- Fairview-Broad River
- Greater Barnardsville
- Leicester-Sandy Mush

Wilson Farm

20 acres on Lower Brush Creek Rd, Fairview

- 100% prime soils
- Tomato, squash, pepper production
- Cane Creek bisects the property, stream restoration currently underway
- Fairview/Fletcher Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 5 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

Budget:

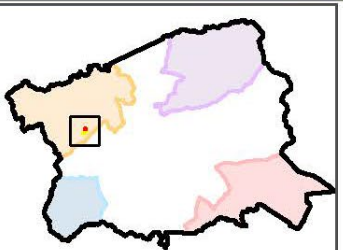
- Current Transaction Cost Request: $38,500
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant – $ 105,000 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond- $ 105,000 (estimate)**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Author: Martha Ross
Date: 2025-08-18



Brown Legacy Farm - Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Brown Legacy Farm
Easement Area +/- 24 acres
Farmstead Area +/- 1 acre
Conservation Focus Areas
Candler-Hominy Valley
Fairview-Broad River
Greater Barnardsville
Leicester-Sandy Mush

Brown Legacy Farm

24 acres on Newfound Rd, Leicester

- 73% prime soils
- Crop fields for hay
- Scenic Viewshed protection
- Newfound Creek runs through the Property
- Leicester – Sandy Mush Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 5 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

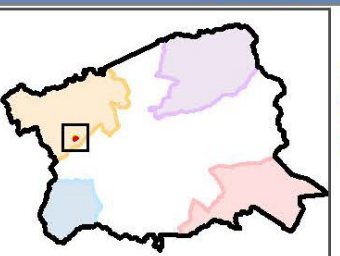
Budget:

- Current Transaction Cost Request: $46,800
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant – $82,500 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond – $82,500 (estimate)**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY



Saddlebrook Farm - Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Saddlebrook Farm
- Easement Area +/- 23 acres
- Exclusion Area +/- 1.5 acres
- Farmstead Area +/- 1 acre

Conservation Focus Areas
- Candler-Hominy Valley
- Fairview-Broad River
- Greater Barnardsville
- Leicester-Sandy Mush

Saddlebrook Farm

23 acres on Newfound Rd, Leicester

- 64% prime soils raising cattle and growing hay
- Viewshed Protection along a commuting road
- Newfound Creek runs through the Property
- Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 5 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

Budget:
- Current Transaction Cost Request: $50,500
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant - $97,500 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond - $ 97,500 (estimate)**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Morgan Branch Farm Easements



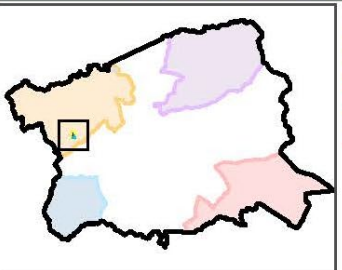
- Morgan Branch Easements +/- 330 acres
- Farmstead Area
- Existing Homesite
- Future Homesite
- Stream Mitigation Easements
- Cemetary Area

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Author: Martha Ross
Date: 2025-09-17



Morgan Branch A - Dairy Barn Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Easement Area +/- 109 acres
Existing Homesite +/- 0.5 acres
Farmstead Areas
Future Homesite A +/- 1.5 acre
Future Homesite B +/- 1.5 acres
Cemetery Area

Stream Mitigation Easements +/- 3 acres

Conservation Focus Areas

Candler-Hominy Valley
Fairview-Broad River
Greater Barnardsville
Leicester-Sandy Mush

Morgan Branch A

109 acres on Newfound Rd, Leicester

- 66% prime soils
- Cattle, dairy, and hay
- Newfound Creek runs through the Property
- Leicester – Sandy Mush Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 6 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

Budget:

- Current Transaction Cost Request: $70,100
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant – $ 294,000 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond - $ 294,000 (estimate)**

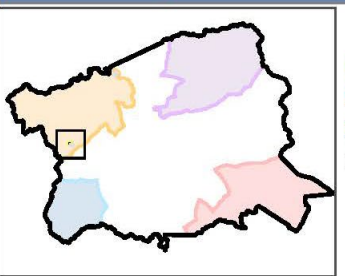
BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Author: Martha Ross
Date: 2025-09-17

Morgan Branch B



Morgan Branch B - Other Place Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Easement Area +/- 77 acres
Farmstead Area +/- 1 acre
Future Homesite +/- 1 acre
Stream Mitigation Easements +/- 7.5 acres

Conservation Focus Areas
Candler-Hominy Valley
Fairview-Broad River
Greater Barnardsville
Leicester-Sandy Mush

77 acres on Newfound Rd, Leicester

- 43% prime soils
- Cattle and hay
- Newfound Creek runs through the Property
- Leicester – Sandy Mush Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 6 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

Budget:

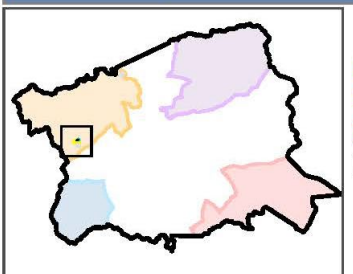
- Current Transaction Cost Request: $65,000
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant - $201,750 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond - $201,750 (estimate)**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Morgan Branch C



Morgan Branch C - Dave's Place Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Land Use

- Easement Area +/- 144 acres
- Existing Homesite +/- 1.5 acres
- Farmstead Area +/- 3.5 acres
- Stream Mitigation Easements +/- 4 acres

Conservation Focus Areas

- Candler-Hominy Valley
- Fairview-Broad River
- Greater Barnardsville
- Leicester-Sandy Mush

144 acres on Morgan Branch Rd, Leicester

- 20% prime soils
- Cattle and hay
- Newfound Creek runs through the Property
- Leicester – Sandy Mush Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 6 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

Budget:

- Current Transaction Cost Request: $78,400
- Future Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant - $362,500 (estimate)
  - **25% Open Space Bond - $362,500 (estimate)**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Author: Martha Ross
Date: 2025-09-22



Slocumb Farm - Conservation Easement Boundary Map



Slocumb Farm
- Easement Area +/- 122 acres
- Farmstead
- Future House Site

Conservation Focus Areas
- Candler-Hominy Valley
- Fairview-Broad River
- Greater Barnardsville
- Leicester-Sandy Mush

Slocumb Farm

122 acres on South Turkey Creek Rd

- Forestland – contiguous with ~4,500 acres already protected in Sandy Mush
- Century Farm
- Priority Conservation Focus Area
- Meets 4 of the 7 Open Space Bond eligibility criteria

Budget:
- Previously funded for transaction costs last year
- Easement Acquisition Funding: 50% Easement Value
  - 25% Agricultural Growth Zone Grant (secured): $234,384.47
  - **25% Open Space Bond: $234,384.47**

BUNCOMBE COUNTY

Easement Project Budgets

Owner	Size	Region	Funding	Transaction Costs	Bond Easement Purchase Estimate (25% EV)
Cedar Hill Farm	63	Alexander	AGZ/Bond	$53,300	$225,000
Wilson Farm	20	Fairview	AGZ/Bond	$38,500	$105,000
Brown Legacy Farm	24	Newfound	AGZ/Bond	$46,800	$82,500
Saddlebrook Farm	23	Newfound	AGZ/Bond	$50,500	$97,500
Morgan Branch A	109	Newfound	AGZ/Bond	$70,100	$294,000
Morgan Branch B	77	Newfound	AGZ/Bond	$65,000	$201,750
Morgan Branch C	144	Newfound	AGZ/Bond	$78,400	$362,500
Slocumb Farm	122	Leicester	AGZ/Bond	Previously funded	$234,385
Totals	582			**$402,600**	**$234,385**
Total AGZ Bond RBA					**$636,985**
AGZ & Bond Funds remaining (after request)					**$1,943,843**



Request for Board Action:

Approve funding for 8 Open Space Bond projects

Appendix

Proximity to Protected Lands

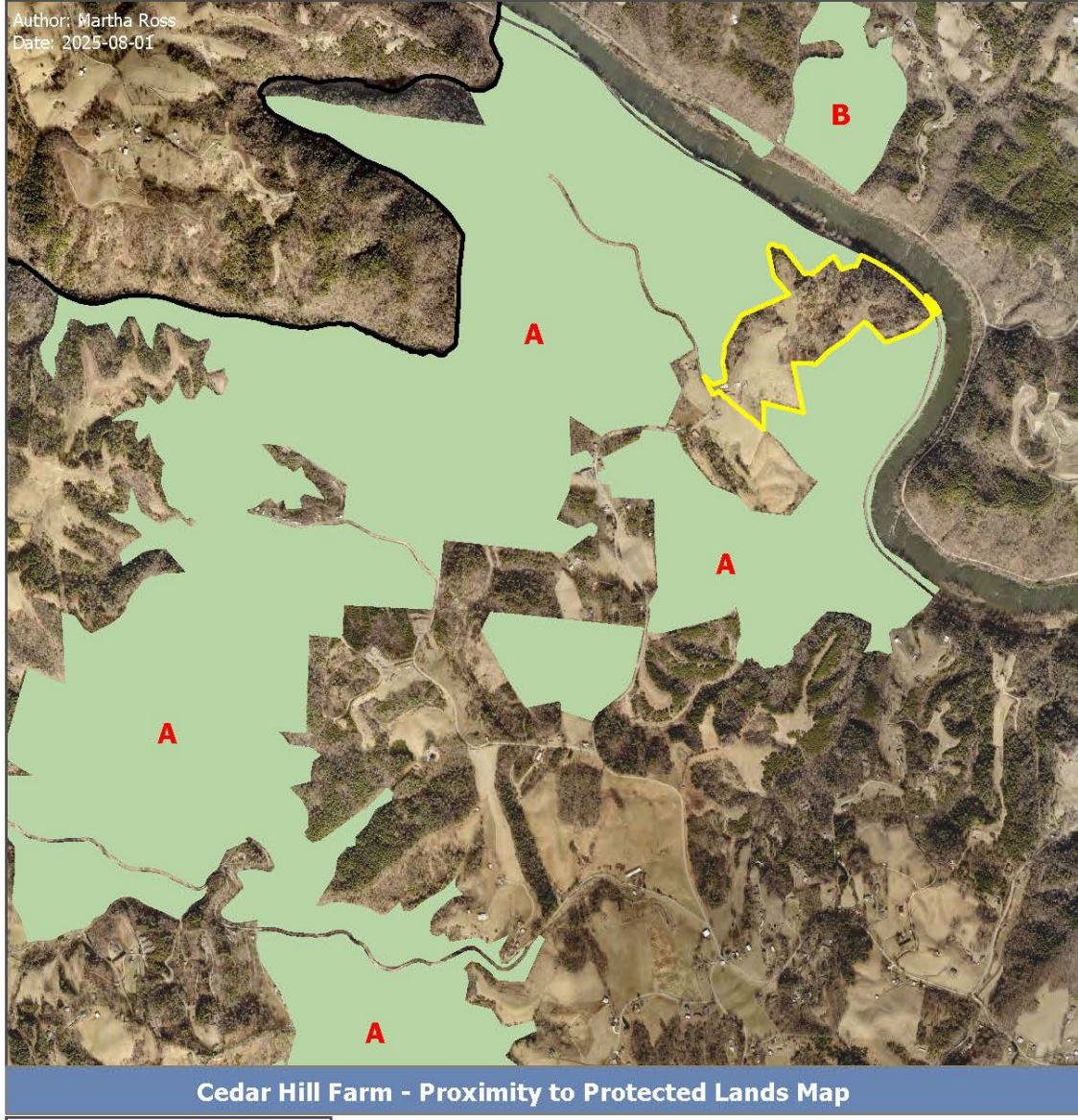
Cedar Hill Farm

Previously Protected

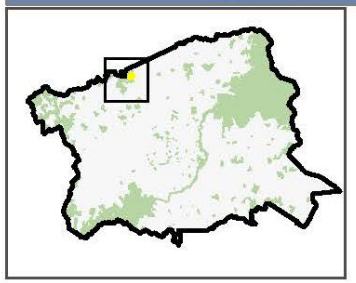
A. Sandy Mush Game Lands

B. SAHC Property





Cedar Hill Farm - Proximity to Protected Lands Map



Easement Area +/- 63 acres

Protected Lands

Wilson Farm

Previously Protected

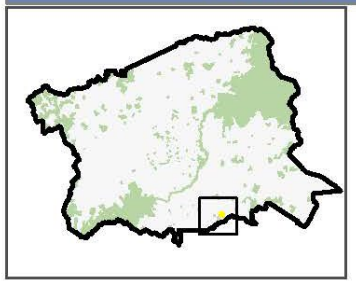
A. Okoboji (underway)

B. Thomas Teague - SAHC





Ray Wilson - Proximity to Protected Lands Map



Property Boundary, +/-26 acres

Protected Lands

Okoboji Easement (Underway)

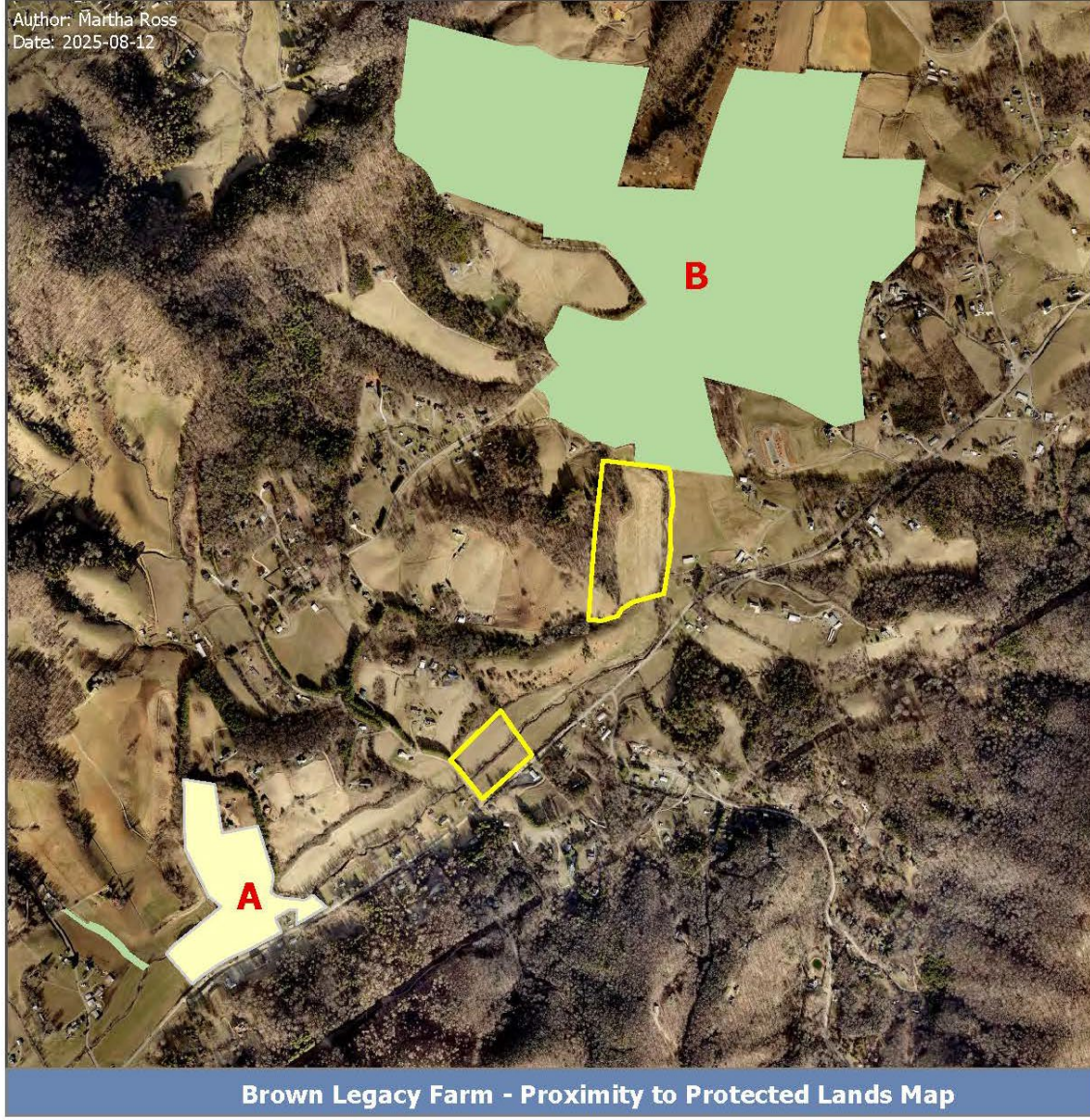
Brown Legacy Farm

Previously Protected

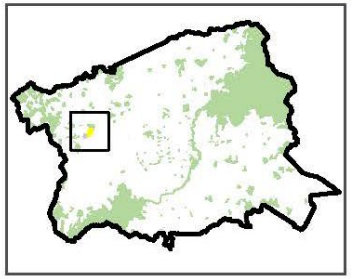
A. Saddlebrook Farm easement (underway)

B. Brown Farm easement





Brown Legacy Farm - Proximity to Protected Lands Map



Brown Legacy Farm
Saddlebrook Farm (Underway)
Protected Lands

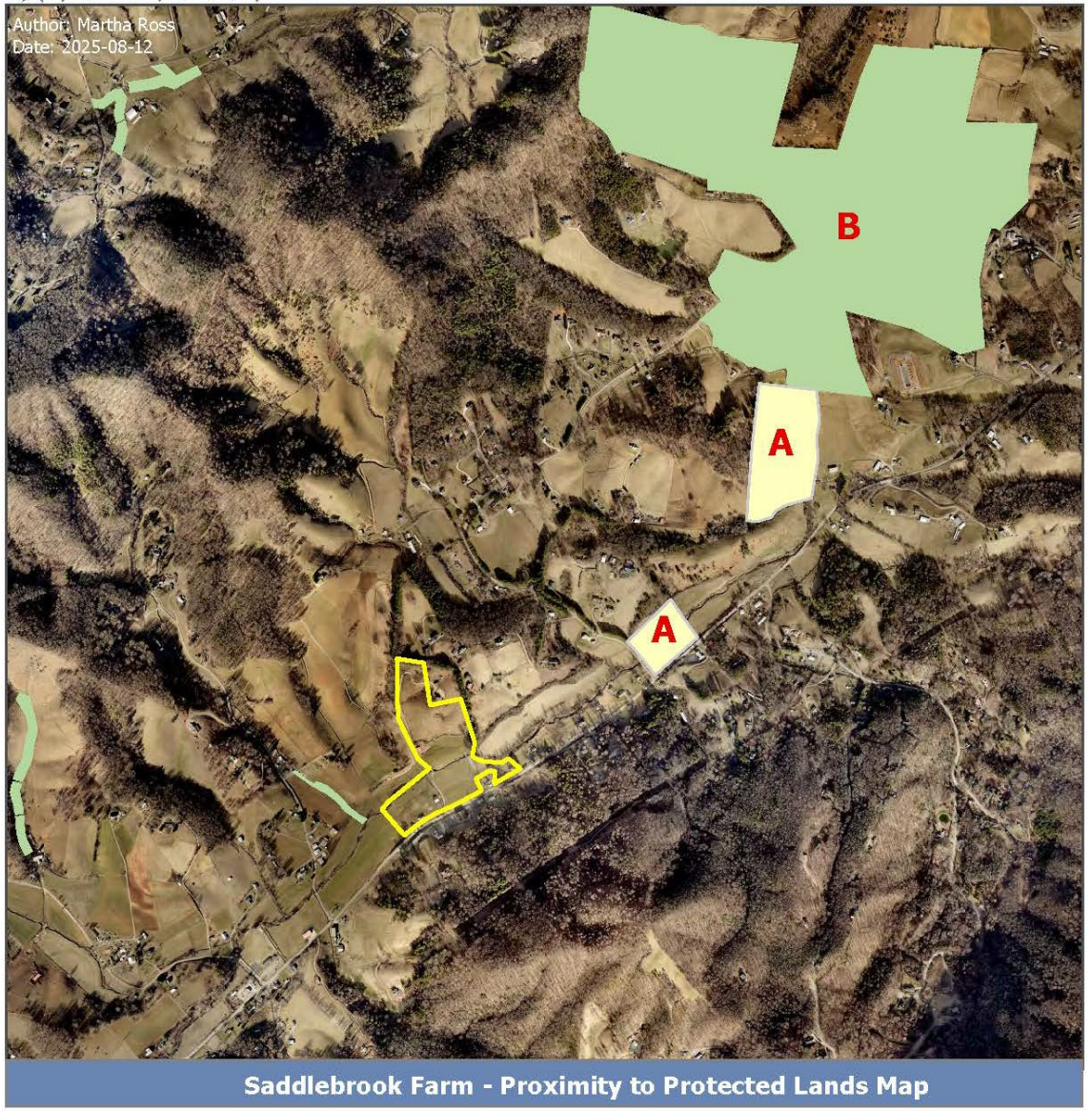
Saddlebrook Farm

Previously Protected

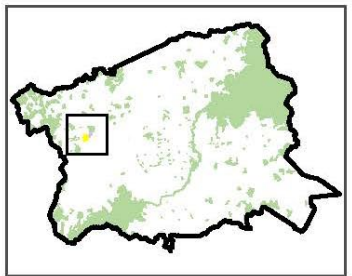
A. Brown Legacy Farm easement (underway)

B. Lynn Brown Farm easement





Saddlebrook Farm - Proximity to Protected Lands Map



Saddlebrook Farm +/- 23 acres

Brown Legacy Farm (Underway)

Protected Lands

10/6/2025

Morgan Branch

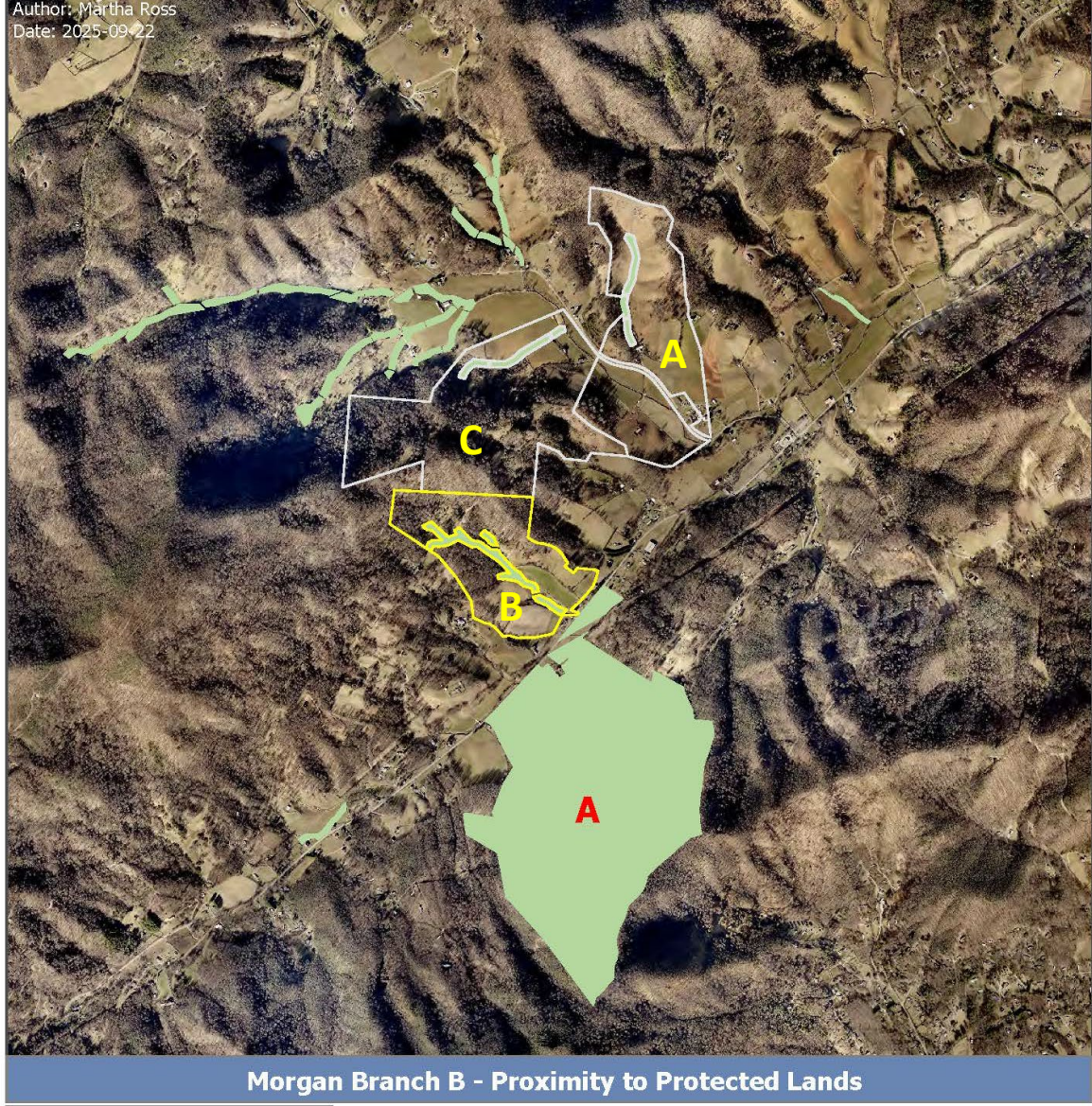
Previously Protected

A. Jasperwood Farm Easements

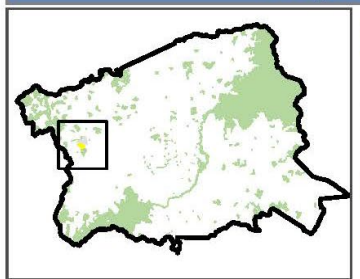








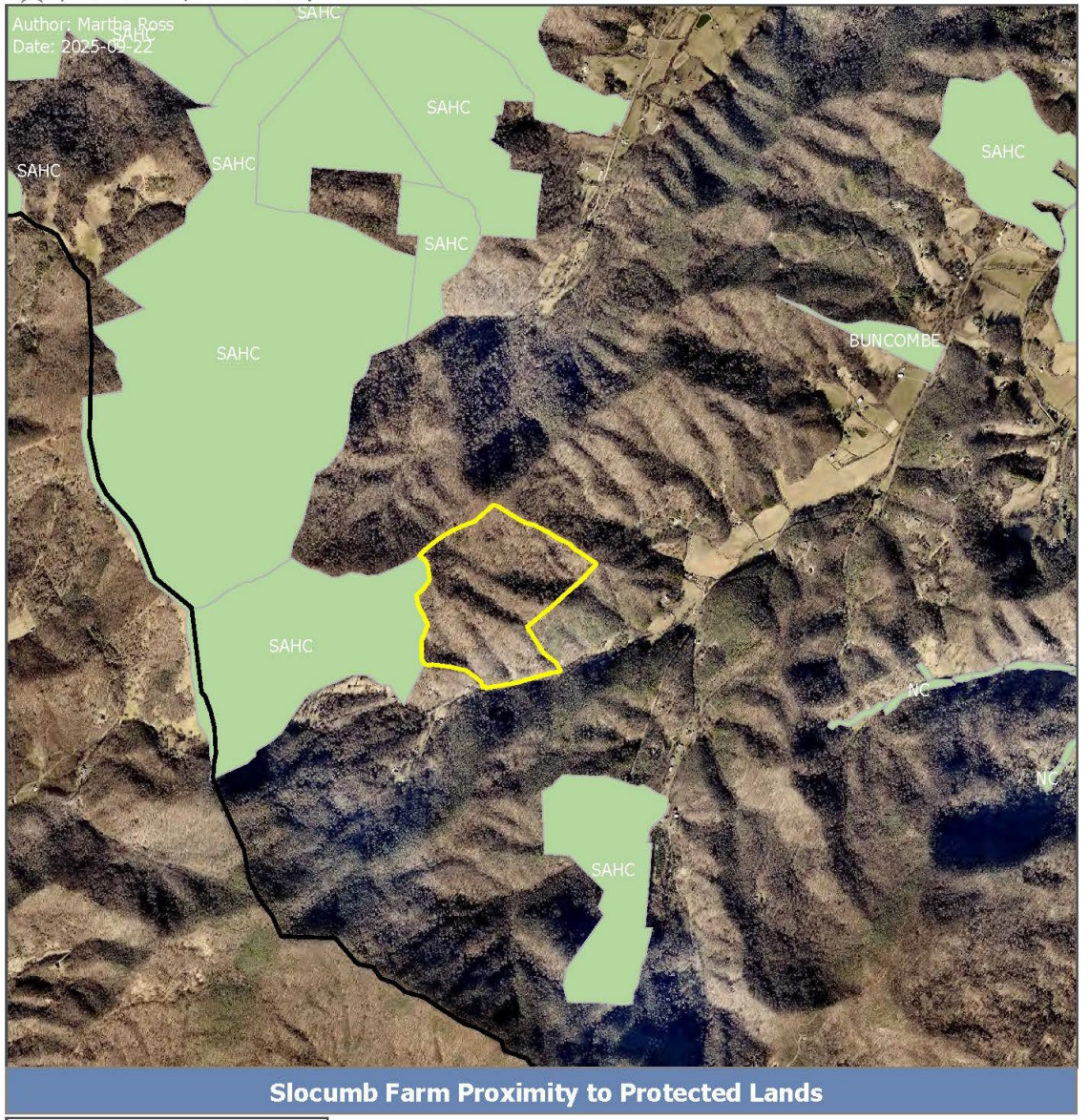
Morgan Branch B - Proximity to Protected Lands



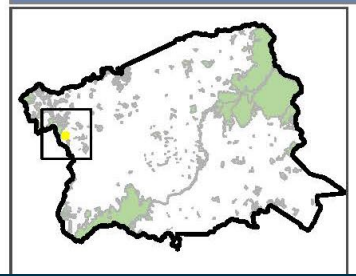
Morgan Branch B +/- 77 acres
Morgan Branch A +/- 109 acres
Morgan Branch C +/- 144 acres
Protected Lands

Slocumb Farm





Slocumb Farm Proximity to Protected Lands



Easement Area +/- 122 acres

Protected Lands